

/415 cont./

231 the Yamana women have. There is no hurry about this, since the dried skin, if it is protected from being soaked, cannot be damaged. The work is done in small sections because it quickly tires any woman. She grasps a piece with both hands, makes flat, and presses them together with a kneading motion, so that this movement alone softens the leather. She lets every part slide through her hands several times and kneads it in different directions. Hard, scarred sections are put between her teeth, and after biting them for a long time and using a great deal of saliva on them they finally also soften up. In general, if she wants to make leather pieces quite pliable, she draws them through her teeth, chewing on them.

The Yamana are not familiar with any special process for making the leather stronger by tanning it and saturating it with special materials. To begin with, the dressed skins have plenty of fat and blubber, which are unintentionally smeared on them so often that they have some protection against rotting due to dampness and against cracking by drying out. The back-cape especially receives ample lubrication from the greasy body, merely by being worn. The Yamana only occasionally take out a piece of leather or a finished object of leather and rub it thoroughly with oil. Even less frequently they mix blubber and a red powder made of burnt clay into a putty-like substance and rub it over the surface of the leather with the pressure of the flannelled hand (96). If they wish

(96)

96. This is the common procedure among the Sella'ham (Vol. 1, 213), probably because the guanaco skins do not contain much fat and because the bodies of these Indians have only a thin layer of fat which is automatically and unintentionally transferred to the objects they use daily.

to make smaller pieces of leather soft and pliable, they saturate them for some time with blubber. Frequent use suffices to keep leather from getting hard and stiff.

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• 11 /416/ Whenever it is necessary, as in the case of a larger cloak of skin, for example, the cloak of other skins, swallowing the people also know how to sew leather pieces together easily and

281 /416 cont. /
 294 durably.

They cut the edges approximately straight and lay them side by side. Near the edges of the two pieces they make a small hole by pricking the leather with an awl or a pointed bone. Into this hole they thread a tendon fiber, uśwūmi, holding it with thumb and index finger and licking it to make it pointed. Then another little hole is bored, and the thread is drawn from one hole to the other over the free edges in a spiral. Finally, they pound the two edges, which are not quite flat, with a round stone to make them flat and less hard so that they will not rub unpleasantly. Such work is very coarse and uneven, for they lack convenient tools. They fasten strands of leather and straps together or tie them to other things simply by knotting them.

283 The fibers of tendon which we have just mentioned, known
 237 as uśwūmi or ūnāna, are often used in sewing and joining pieces of leather. Strands of guanaco tendon are separated into fibers, but a person who does not have these uses the tendon fibers of otter or
 [136] beaver (Myocastor colpus) tails. The beaver is rare here, however. After they have skinned the animal, they cut off the tail at the root. It is dried for some time, and the individual vertebrae are broken off without tearing the tendons. The last two or three vertebrae are left together. The tendons which have been loosened by this process are separated with the fingernails until they become thin enough to be used for sewing. They then hang like a tuft on the smallest vertebrae of the tail and can be torn off with a sharp tug.

C. Cleanliness and Body Ornamentation

515 Every stranger is repulsed by the unclean, unkempt appear-
 356 ance of the Yamana (91). It is disgusting to see these human

91. Among the opinions of former travelers I shall cite only what Snow (a) :I, 345 has written: "They appeared to have no idea of cleanliness, for a dirtier set of individuals I have rarely met with; and I imagine they never attempt to wash themselves" /cited in English/.

or more were sewn together. In general, however, this garment extended only to the waist and did not completely encircle the body. It was tied across the chest with thongs. When out-of-doors it was worn over the windward shoulder. And these people dwelt in a latitude corresponding to that of the Aleutian islands and Labrador!

The eastern Yahgan at times wore capes of guanaco-skin which were better suited to the cold. One of these (fig. 43) we illustrate; it does not attain the size of the Ona robe shown in fig. 6. The western Yahgan and the Alaculuf used skins of the coypu, a small land-otter known to the Yahgan as *asispuf*.

2. PUBIC COVERING.—A triangular pubic covering of skin (*maishuoldes*) was usually worn by the women (fig. 44).

3. MOCCASINS.—The Yahgan often went barefoot, but at times they wore moccasins of seal-skin (*hisi*), which resemble the guanaco-skin footwear of the Ona, but are not made in quite the same way (fig. 45). To begin with, a piece of skin shaped like a truncated triangle is cut out and trimmed to the proper size. This lacks the attached heel-strap of the Ona moccasin (fig. 8, a). Holes are made across the large end (fig. 46, a), which is fitted snugly around the heel. A short strap is then looped through the upper pair of holes (fig. 46, b) and the heel sewn together. Holes are pierced on the long sides; these are doubled over and laced in the Ona fashion with a strap across the toes and across the instep. These moccasins are worn with the hair-side outward and are stuffed with grass. The writer found them when wet even more foul than the guanaco moccasins, and neither so warm nor so comfortable for walking.



FIG. 44.—Yahgan pubic covering. Width, 9 in. (14/2356)

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